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PROPOSED Reply to Office Action of April 6, 2004

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**I. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.*

2-5 and 7-14 (Cancelled).

15. (New) A method of sustaining the environment by converting vehicle environmental performance data into information that is useful both to consumers in their vehicle purchasing decisions, and to manufacturers in enhancing marketing of vehicles for sale to said consumers, said method comprising the steps of:

obtaining said vehicle environmental performance data;

identifying vehicles by vehicle manufacturers, brands, and models;

identifying said vehicle models by vehicle configurations;

establishing vehicle utility classes for said vehicles;

grouping said vehicle models into said vehicle utility classes to allow evaluation of environmental performance of said vehicle models by said vehicle utility classes;

developing forecasts of sales of said vehicle configurations by at least one of the following steps:

obtaining said forecasts from said vehicle manufacturers; and

estimating said forecasts;

identifying vehicle environmental performance data components;

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obtaining environmental performance values for said environmental  
performance data components by said vehicle configurations;

developing environmental performance scores for said vehicle models by  
sales-weighting said environmental performance values of said environmental data  
components by said forecasts of sales;

ranking said vehicles by comparing said environmental performance scores of  
said vehicle models in said vehicle utility classes to identify top performers of said vehicle  
models in said vehicle utility classes;

presenting awards to manufacturers of said top performers; and  
communicating said results and said awards to said consumers.

16. (New) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:  
further developing said environmental performance scores by component-  
weighting said environmental performance scores by said environmental performance data  
components according to a judgment of the severity of environmental impacts of said  
environmental performance data components.

17. (New) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:  
licensing said awards to said manufacturers.

18. (New) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:  
ranking said vehicles by comparing said environmental performance scores of  
said vehicle models to identify top performers of said vehicle brands.

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19. (New) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:  
ranking said vehicles by comparing said environmental performance scores of  
said vehicle models to identify top performers of said vehicle manufacturers.
20. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said ranking said vehicles step includes said  
top performers being a predetermined top percentile of said vehicle models by said vehicle  
utility classes.
21. (New) The method of claim 20 further comprising the step of:  
presenting awards to manufacturers of said predetermined top percentile of  
said vehicle models.
22. (New) The method of claim 20 wherein said ranking step includes said top percentile  
being a top quartile of said vehicle models by said vehicle utility classes.
23. (New) The method of claim 20 wherein said ranking step includes said top percentile  
being the best of said vehicle models by said vehicle utility classes.
24. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said grouping step includes said vehicle  
utility classes including car classes and truck classes.
25. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein said car classes include subcompact,  
compact, mid-size, full-size, premium, luxury, and sports car, and further wherein said truck

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classes include minivan, full-size van, compact pickup, full-size pickup, compact sport utility vehicle, mid-size sport utility vehicle, and full-size sport utility vehicle.

26. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of identifying vehicle environmental performance data components includes identifying a fuel consumption component that is convertible to a miles-per-gallon equivalency component for electric vehicles using a watt-hours of energy per gallon of fuel conversion factor.

27. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of identifying vehicle environmental performance data components includes identifying a solid waste and material consumption component, and further wherein said step of obtaining environmental performance values includes obtaining recycled content values.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of:  
verifying the accuracy of at least a portion of said vehicle environmental performance data using an independent auditor to audit said at least a portion of said vehicle environmental performance data.

29. (New) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:  
verifying the accuracy of at least a portion of said vehicle environmental performance data using an independent auditor to audit said at least a portion of said vehicle environmental performance data.

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30. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein said step of obtaining recycled content values includes obtaining recycled content in weight values of given vehicle configurations by multiplying recycled content percentages of said given vehicle configurations by curb weights of said given vehicle configurations.

31. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein said step of weighting said environmental performance values includes multiplying said weight values of said given vehicle configurations by percentages of sales of said vehicle models that said given vehicle configurations represent.

32. (New) The method of claim 31 further comprising the step of:  
further weighting said environmental performance scores by said environmental performance data components according to a judgment of the severity of environmental impacts of said environmental performance data components, wherein said solid waste and material consumption component is weighted at about ten percent of said scores.

33. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of obtaining environmental performance values includes obtaining certification values from government air pollution certification values.

34. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein said step of identifying vehicle environmental performance data components includes identifying an air pollution component

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and said method further comprises the step of further weighting said environmental performance scores by said environmental performance data components according to a judgment of the severity of environmental impacts of said environmental performance data components, wherein said air pollution component represents about fifty percent of said scores.

35. (New) The method of claim 34 wherein said air pollution component is component-weighted by substantially equal parts of photochemical pollutants and toxicant pollutants.

36. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein said photochemical pollutants are weighted by substantially equal parts of NO<sub>x</sub> and NMHC and said toxicants are weighted by substantially equal parts of CO and particulate matter.

37. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein the percentage of sales that each vehicle configuration represents within its respective vehicle model is multiplied by a certification value for said each vehicle configuration.

38. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of obtaining environmental performance values includes obtaining miles-per-gallon values from government data.

39. (New) The method of claim 38 wherein said step of identifying vehicle environmental performance data components includes identifying a fuel consumption component and said method further comprises the step of further weighting said

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environmental performance scores by said environmental performance data components according to a judgment of the severity of environmental impacts of said environmental performance data components, wherein said fuel consumption component is weighted at about forty percent of said scores.

40. (New) The method of claim 38 wherein said fuel consumption component is calculated by multiplying the percentage of sales that each vehicle configuration represents within its respective vehicle model by a miles-per-gallon value for said each vehicle configuration.

41. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein said fuel consumption component is further calculated according to the following equation:

$$(1/M_1 - 1/M_x) / (1/M_1 - 1/M_2);$$

where

$M_1$  = lowest mileage in vehicle utility class

$M_x$  = sales-weighted mileage of the vehicle model

$M_2$  = highest mileage in vehicle utility class.

42. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of obtaining said vehicle environmental performance data involves obtaining said data from at least one of a government source and a manufacturer source.

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43. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of developing forecasts of sales involves developing said forecasts substantially concurrently with an introduction of a vehicle model year.

44. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said communicating step involves using the Internet to freely communicate said results.

45. (New) A method of sustaining the environment by converting environmental performance data into information that is useful both to consumers in their product or service purchasing decisions, and to manufacturers in enhancing marketing of products or services for sale to said consumers, said method comprising the steps of:

- obtaining said environmental performance data;

- identifying products or services by business entities, brands, and models;

- identifying said models by configurations;

- establishing utility classes for said products or services;

- grouping said models into said utility classes to allow evaluation of

environmental performance of said models by said utility classes;

- developing forecasts of sales of said configurations by at least one of the

following steps:

- obtaining said forecasts from said business entities; and

- estimating said forecasts;

- identifying environmental performance data components;



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obtaining environmental performance values for said environmental  
performance data components by said configurations;

developing environmental performance scores for said models by sales-  
weighting said environmental performance values of said environmental data components by  
said forecasts of sales;

ranking said products or services by comparing said environmental  
performance scores of said models in said utility classes to identify top performers of said  
models in said utility classes;

presenting awards to business entities of said top performers; and  
communicating said results and said awards to said consumers.

46. (New) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:  
further developing said environmental performance scores by component-  
weighting said environmental performance scores by said environmental performance data  
components according to a judgment of the severity of environmental impacts of said  
environmental performance data components.

47. (New) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:  
licensing said awards to said business entities.

48. (New) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:  
ranking said products or services by comparing said environmental  
performance scores of said models to identify top performers of said brands.

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49. (New) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:  
ranking said products or services by comparing said environmental  
performance scores of said models to identify top performers of said business entities.
50. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said ranking said products or services step  
includes said top performers being a predetermined top percentile of said models by said  
utility classes.
51. (New) The method of claim 20 further comprising the step of:  
presenting awards to business entities of said predetermined top percentile of  
said models.
52. (New) The method of claim 20 wherein said ranking step includes said top percentile  
being a top quartile of said models by said utility classes.
53. (New) The method of claim 20 wherein said ranking step includes said top percentile  
being the best of said models by said utility classes.
54. (New) The method of claim 45, further comprising the step of:  
verifying the accuracy of at least a portion of said environmental performance  
data using an independent auditor to audit said at least a portion of said environmental  
performance data.

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55. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein said step of obtaining said environmental performance data involves obtaining said data from at least one of a government source and a business entity source.

56. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein said step of developing forecasts of sales involves developing said forecasts substantially concurrently with an introduction of a product or service model year.

57. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein said communicating step involves using the Internet to freely communicate said results.